

[Sri Kala Venkata Rao]

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nor take away any old rights that were in existence at the time when this Act comes into force. It only seeks to see that any benefits accruing out of the State money being spent on the irrigation works, to the enhancement of the value of the land, should not go to the landlord. It is a negative provision inserted in this clause and it is there in order to help the tenant who is the actual cultivator.

"With reference to his question, to whom is this compensation payable, I would invite Mr. Narayana Menon to refer to sub-clause 5 of clause 6 which, I think, must satisfy him, because under this clause, it is the tribunal that is to apportion the compensation that is to be paid to the owners of areas to be acquired. A special Act always supersedes a general Act and this being a special Act, even if it injures any of the provisions of the general Act, it should be deemed to be an improvement. The whole question should be looked at from the point of view of the benefit that it will confer on the people of Malabar and it is in that light that the Bill has been conceived and framed, and if anything more is to be done, it will be done at the proper time.

"Sir, I thank the House for the support it has accorded to this Bill and I request it to pass it into law immediately."

The motion was put and carried.

MR. PRESIDENT :—"I shall now put the Bill clause by clause to vote."

Clauses 2 to 20 of the Bill were put and carried.

Clause 1 was put and carried.

The Preamble was also put and carried.

THE HON. SRI KALA VENKATA RAO :—"Sir, I move—
'that the Bill be now passed into law'."

The motion was put and carried and the Bill was passed into law.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE *RE*
GUNTUR FOOD SITUATION—*cont.*

MR. PRESIDENT :—"Mr. B. Narayanaswami Nayudu will now move his adjournment motion regarding the Guntur Food Situation."

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—"Mr. President, Sir, with regard to the motion for adjournment regarding the statement of Government on the Guntur Food Situation, before taking it up directly, I shall just say one word at the outset. Unfortunately this statement has been given under the authority of the Government, or the Secretary, and I don't think it was their intention that a debate should be raised on it."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"This is the Government statement that was presented in the other House, Sir."

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MR. PRESIDENT :—“ What the hon. Member says is that it is not so said on the face of it.”

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—“ Well, Sir, there are three questions which I wish to raise with regard to this statement. The first question is the abandonment of rural rationing about which, what the statement says is this : ‘ Rural rationing has partially broken down and grain is not readily available to the poorer classes at reasonable prices.’ Sir, though figures have been given, unfortunately the figures really relating to rural rationing have not been set out in the statement. What I have been able to gather from the statement is that the Guntur district is a surplus district and can export some rice, besides feeding the non-producing population. All that I can gather from the figures furnished in the statement is that in the previous year a total amount of 93,464 tons of rice was procured and for inland consumption 43,613 tons were used, and 49,820 tons were exported. Those are the figures with regard to the previous year. In the present year, it is estimated that there will be available for procurement 81,200 tons of rice of which 42,000 tons are for export and 39,000 tons for inland consumption. Thus practically the quantity of rice which is available for export is also necessary for inland consumption in the district. The first point you will notice is, whereas in the previous year, the inland consumption was 43,643 tons of rice, the present estimate covers only 39,000 tons. I do not know how this inland rice quantity has been reduced by an amount of 4,643 tons of rice. That is one thing. The procurement in the previous year for January 1946, February 1946 and March 1946 are given in this note. They amount to 57,619 tons of rice: that is, last year, so much quantity was procured from the ryots. But this year, for the same months, the procurement both through the societies and through the millers amounted to 14,389 tons of rice. Fifty-seven thousands six hundred and nineteen tons last year but this year only 14,389 tons. The point I wish to know from the Hon. Minister for Food is—though I put a question, and no doubt it was late in the evening, but I expected him to give the information in this note—it is not however stated in the note—how much of these 14,389 tons of rice that has been procured has been sent over for export and how much of it has been retained for inland consumption. Even now, if the Minister gives the information, I will be grateful. I just wait to take an answer from him, if he has one. 7 p.m.

“ The next question I would like to put is : ‘ during these months of January, February and March, how much of this procured rice was given away last year for export and how much of it was consumed inland.’ That will enable us to know whether there was really a good supply so far as internal needs required, i.e., what was the supply, what was the demand, how it was met, or was it not met at all. The two important points therefore which are necessary to be cleared are : was there any export of rice, and was there anything at all supplied to the rural areas.

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Of course, they say that the statutory rationed areas, i.e., the urban population, has been given, but as regards the rural population, evidently they were starved outright. I would come to it later on. But the points I wish to know from the Hon. Minister are, what was the amount procured, and did you give anything at all to the rural areas. Did you export any portion of it to other districts; if that had been allowed, who was responsible for it? I do not mind whether it was during the time of the present Ministry or the previous Ministry; has it been brought to the notice of the Government by the officers concerned that the rural areas have not been given rice, that they were left to shift for themselves, but that the urban areas were supplied plentifully with rice, at least to the maximum amount for which they were eligible. Who is responsible for it; how did it occur; what steps did this Ministry take in regard to this matter? It is a plain question I am putting and I hope the Minister will find it possible to give the reply. After all, will it be impossible for this Government to know what was supplied in January, February and March; what was the export during those months and what was the supply made previously by the societies. Is it difficult to get this information? Even now I wait for an answer from the Hon. Minister.

"The next point I would like to raise is this: a very serious statement has been made in this note as regards the attitude that was taken by the ryots with regard to paddy. Here you have the situation where the urban population has been supplied plentifully, and we have the rural population practically not supplied with anything at all. We have also a producing population in existence. What will happen? Does the Minister expect that these persons who have stocks of paddy or rice in their hands will refuse to give to the inland consumers, does he expect them merely to keep quiet? The reason for the failure of the societies to get sufficient paddy for the requirements of the district is said to be that the ryots with paddy in their hands sold it in the black-market at the highest price. May I know if the Minister challenges the equity of the proceedings that took place in Guntur? Rationing might have worked alright in the urban areas; but in the rural areas what were they doing? Did they not create a situation which obliged the producers to part with their stocks when practically the people were left without anything at all? And what is the next remark in this note: they say the tobacco ryot has got plenty of money and therefore he goes and buys it. Here it is:

'Undoubtedly, a large quantity of paddy and rice has been sold to the upland taluks; it is impossible to estimate this amount. This state of affairs was aggravated by the partial failure of millet crops in the upland parts of the district and by the amount of money which the ryots in the upland taluks have got from such paying commercial crops as tobacco.'

I am very glad, Sir, that on the Treasury Bench, there are now certain persons who know what these commercial crops are, why these ryots are growing these crops and what money they are making on tobacco. Do we not know how many ryots make money from tobacco in order to have a rice meal? Does the Minister grudge the tobacco man having a rice meal? Why should

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he not go and buy rice, why should he go and buy *chólam* and maize? Why should he be found fault with for it? If he wants to grow a tobacco crop, is it a sin? And what is the result of it all? The rice-eating ryots have less to eat. Sir, there is a proverb in Chittoor which says: 'చరి రిచి అమవాస్యయేన'. On the *Amavasa* day only these unfortunate ryots eat rice; on the other days they take only *ragi* in the Chittoor district. Does the Minister want that the peasant should continue to eat *ragi* and give *tharpanam* only with *perugu* and *pappu* on *Amavasya* days? Does the Minister want the poor ryot to eat *ragi* only on *Amavasa* days because he cannot get rice in sufficient quantity? Sir, it is most iniquitous and I wish to make the strongest condemnation of the statement made here that rice-eating people have been deprived of their rice because the tobacco people have gone and bought the rice for themselves.

Again, Sir, it is clearly iniquitous to say that the situation has been met in the most natural manner. Water finds its level. We have a producing population who have got stocks, and instead of blaming the Government officials, you want to blame the ryots who grow the paddy and you want to blame the consumer when you say that the tobacco people go and buy rice. All this is really curious. This is a very serious statement made by a responsible Government. It says there are two main causes for the producers withholding their stocks:

'The first is that the ryots expected that the price of paddy would be raised or that the Government would give a bonus.

'Repeated declarations were made that neither would be done because the Government of India had ruled against an increase as a matter of all-India policy. But the ryots still seem to hold that there might be some increase in the offing.'

Then reference is made to Dr. Ranga and the note says:—

'Dr. Ranga is reported to have stated that he advised the ryots if necessary to resort to *satyagraha* by not yielding their stocks to the Government and letting it be acquired by force. Then Dr. Rajan, the Food Minister, would be forced to fly to Delhi and fight for increasing paddy price.'

Sir, the central point on which the whole thing turns is whether the Government are going to say finally 'no' or reserve it as a matter of expediency or what may be called 'practical politics' so that the ryot may go on getting only Rs. 11 or Rs. 12 and not more. If there is any attempt by the ryots' associations to ask for to agitate for and to get an increase in the paddy price, is that going to be called a crime and is that going to be penalized by this Government? That is the plain result of this statement here. Mr. Ranga, as a leader, has perhaps indulged in irresponsible talk; let us call him an irresponsible leader; but does the Government want to penalize the ryot if he asks for an increased price for paddy? I am asking the Government, if they think like that, the reason for it. In the speech of the Premier there was statement regarding this price of paddy. With an individual like that as Prime Minister, at the top of the Government, with the declarations that have been made previously and with the action of the

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previous Ministry—with all these things before them, the Government have thought it fit to announce an additional payment of As. 8. Is this Government going to sit tight on the ryot and see that he accepts this Rs. 5-7-6 and tell him: 'If you ask for more, please note the Public Safety Act will be applied to you' or something like that? Sir, my submission is: the question of the agriculturists' prosperity is the one thing on which the existence of a Ministry depends here or elsewhere. If Delhi does not come to the rescue, are you so helpless in the matter of meeting a legitimate demand? If you want to satisfy the consumer, by all means do that. I do not want you to raise the price so far as the consumer is concerned. But is there any other way to assist the agriculturists? Time and again, member after member from this side of the House has cited the case of the poor elementary teacher getting Rs. 25 and asked how he could be expected to live upon that. I ask the Prime Minister, and there is Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliyar also who knows the difficulties of these ryots, how many of these ryots can live on Rs. 25 or Rs. 30 per month? In each village you can count the ryots who get an income of Rs. 30 and less per month. Have they got a provident fund system to help them in their later years? Have they got a pension; have they not got their women and their children to support; have not they got their children to educate? Do they get dearness allowance as many others do and how are they to get anything at all which they need? I ask the Members on the other side: Is there not a pledge on your part to make the ryot class a prosperous class and in these days when the prices of all things are going up, when you are also satisfied that these prices will not go down in the near future, are you not entitled to draw upon your reserves or raise further taxation in order to meet the legitimate demands of the ryots? Sir, that is the central position, and that is the position which I wanted to explain, though it be at this late hour of the day. Sir, there is a set of creatures in the world who always think that the tail it is that moves the head and the head does not move the tail. Sir, this cannot be called a democratic government if this state of things is to continue. I do hope, Sir, that this Government, headed as it is by a man like our Premier will see to it that it is the head which moves the tail and not the tail that moves the head."

7-15
P.M.

* SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO:—"Mr. President, Sir, I should really congratulate Mr. Narayanaswami Nayudu on the telling way in which he has put the case of the Guntur people. I only want to say a very few words, Sir. We would like to hear from the Hon. Minister for Food what the present situation in that district is. For, I thought, from the statement which the Hon. Minister has presented to the House, that rural rationing has failed, but now I understand from the Hon. Minister that the situation has now become favourable and that there will be no further breakdown, in rural rationing. Sir, we want to know whether, from the official information that Government have received, they

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have been convinced that this new experiment of producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies has failed to come to the rescue of Government in the matter of procurement. Now, Sir, even the millers may find it increasingly difficult to procure enough of the grains because the increase in the cost of living still shows an upward trend. Even for the ryot, the cost of living has increased and so, the producer has to be paid a little more, and not the middleman, Sir. When there is an increase in the cost of living all round and when people working in offices are given increased wages and salaries, is it not necessary that the ryot who produces food should be paid a little more in order that he may maintain his standard of life which is already low? I ask, Sir, should he not be given a little more money for the amount of grain that is taken from him. While far from being an inducement to the producer, I think it is an important point to be considered. Unfortunately, Sir, we are tied down with the Government of India and I do not know when the Commodities Board set up by the Government of India will report and will fix the prices of grains. I think, Sir, the Government of India should fix the prices in such a manner as to enable the actual producer to get a little more in order to make him keep up his standard of living. This would perhaps induce the people to part with their grains, and they generously come forward without any coercion on the part of the officials. Sir, now that the producer-cum-consumer co-operative society is out of the field and that the old machinery of procurement has been installed in Guntur and other districts—and deficit districts only depend on procurements through agencies—we would like to be assured that not only stocks for internal consumption but also supplies for deficit districts will be ensured. I am sure the object of my hon. Friend, Mr. Narayanaswami Nayudu is merely to elicit information from the Government and to allay the fears that may be in the public minds as regards the alarming situation in Guntur. Especially, Sir, by the series of supplementary questions that were put in the Assembly, people were under the impression that it was something alarming. I am sure that Mr. Narayanaswami Nayudu's object is merely to elicit information so that the fears of the public may be allayed. With these few words, Sir, I request the Hon. Minister for Food to enlighten us on the points that I have mentioned."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Mr. President, Sir, the statement of the Government placed on the table of the House reveals more than one alarming feature. At the very outset, it points out that there has been no general and widespread failure of crops to apprehend a famine. Then, Sir, it points out that the trouble is largely due to the inability of the new procuring agency. It also states, Sir, that the target figures were reached last year in spite of a bad season, but this year, it was not only not possible to export but there was not sufficient paddy for the people of the district itself. It also states, Sir, that there has been blackmarketing and people were getting paddy at the highest price at which they were able to get. It also states

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that a responsible Congress Leader, Mr. Ranga, threatened the Food Minister by stating that if necessary he would advise the ryots to resort to satyagraha by not yielding their stocks to the Government and letting it be acquired by force.

"Now, Sir, I would like to know from the Government why the method adopted by the previous Ministry of paying bonus to the paddy-grower was not adopted by this Ministry also. The fact is this: Let me not mince matters. The real cause for this grave state of threatened famine in Guntur is not to be found either in the failure of the procuring agency or in the failure of the Government to pay bonus or in the refusal of the Government of India to increase the cost of paddy. Now, Sir, what the man in the street feels is this, and we want a reply from the Hon. Minister on this point. Is it not due to the cliques, if I may say so, that exist in the Congress Party and about which Gandhiji also has mentioned? Is it not due to the rivalry in the various groups in the Congress Party that this state of affairs in Guntur has been brought about. Sir, it is said that some Congressmen induced the paddy-growers not to part with their paddy in order that he may bring discredit on the present Government. We want to know from the Government what the real state of affairs is. Is it a fact that some gentlemen was instigating the people not to part with their paddy? In the statement placed on the table of the House, Government have stated that there is sufficient quantity of paddy in the district. Such being the case, what is the cause for the refusal on the part of the people to part with their paddy? Again, there is another point, Sir. It is stated, Sir, that the millet-eaters are not prepared to eat the imported millet.

"So, Sir, I think that this Government is responsible for the state of affairs in the Guntur district because people outside feel and the people in the district also feel that they are made to suffer on account of the bickerings in the Congress Camp. I also feel, Sir, that these people ought not to suffer on this account and that a state of famine ought not to be brought about on account of differences in the Congress Camp. So, I ask, why Mr. Ranga, being a responsible Congress Leader and the President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, should go to the Food Minister, a Tamilian gentleman and say, 'if necessary, I would advise the ryots to resort to satyagraha by not yielding their stocks to the Government and letting it be acquired by force.' Therefore, Sir, this Government is responsible for this state of affairs. Let the Government place all the facts before the public, let them place all their cards before the table in order that we, belonging to the other party, should know what the real state of affairs is. Government admit that there is sufficient paddy; they admit that blackmarketing is going on in the districts; they also admit that people who are accustomed to eat rice have now to take to millets. In view of these things, Sir, it is necessary for people outside to know whether there is really a state of actual famine or not.

"Sir, the other point is about the failure of the producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies. Sir, much was said about these

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societies in previous speeches and in previous meetings. That these producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies have failed is admitted even by the Government. Now, having found out their lot, what are the Government going to do with these societies? Is it only in the Guntur area or only in particular areas that the Government are going to take action against these societies by handing over the machinery of procurement to other agencies or are the Government going to continue these producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies in others parts of the Province in order that there may be famine on some other occasion in those parts? Is it only then that they would like to take action with regard to these societies in those parts of the Province? I simply suggest that it is necessary to take drastic measures against these societies. Sir, Malabar has been clamouring against these societies. (The Hon. Sri K. Madhava Menon :—" No, no.") There is difference of opinion. Sir, in regard to this matter, there is no unanimity of opinion. My hon. Friend on the other side may say that it is untrue. We hope that it is so; but I have heard that hundreds and thousands of people sent memorials to the Prime Minister against these societies. So, Sir, we want a categorical reply from this Government whether they are going to continue these societies which were the pet societies of the previous Government and particularly of my hon. Friend, Mr. Prakasam, the ex-Premier. Are they going to continue these societies, or are they going to say good-bye to these societies handing over the work of procurement to experienced agencies?

" Now, Sir, there was a great clamour formerly against merchants. We do not know the reason why the Prakasam Government was so much against the merchants. It was on account of the feeling that this merchant community should not exist that the previous Ministry wanted these producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies to come into being. Sir, some people thought that these societies were instruments in the hands of the Congress Party to strengthen their position. But, now we find that the present Ministry is going to do away with these societies at least in one or two districts and so it is not a party question. So, the question is not really understood by the people at large. Therefore, we have got a right to know from the Hon. the Minister for Food whether they are going to put an end to the producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies, whether they are not going to allow the usual and normal channels of trade to continue the work of procurement and ease the situation or whether they are going to allow this experiment to continue in other parts of the Province and make those districts also face a situation similar to that of Guntur. We hope, Sir, that the Hon. Minister in charge of Food will make a clear statement with regard to these matters and will allay the suspicion that is lurking in the minds of the people. In spite of the fact that there has been a change-over in the Ministry, in spite of the fact that the old order has changed and given place to a new order and that the present Ministry was

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expected to rectify the defects of the old Ministry, nothing has been done in the matter of procurement of food. Nothing has been done to see that a situation such as the one which has arisen in Guntur is prevented from doing harm. I hope, Sir, the Hon. the Minister for Food will try to do his best to see that the suspicion of the people is removed."

7.30
p.m.

K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :- "Mr. President, Sir, again and again I went through the statement on the Guntur food situation that has been placed on the table of the House, but I have not been able to find out from it what the exact position is, and whether the people will get sufficient food in the ordinary way or not. The first paragraph of the statement says that rural rationing has partially broken down and grain is not readily available to the poorer classes at reasonable rates and the sentence following it gives the reason for it, viz., 'The trouble is largely the result of the inability of the new procurement machinery to cope with the work'. What is it that the Government have done to remedy this evil? What have they done in the matter? They say that paddy has been found to be plenty there. The last sentence of paragraph 2 of the statement says; 'that neither the target figure for procurement this year nor the amount estimated as exportable surplus can be regarded as excessive or beyond the capacity of the district to attain'. That being the case, why were you not able to procure the necessary paddy; why did this rural rationing break down and what steps the Government have taken to prevent the breaking down of rural rationing and to alleviate the suffering caused to the people on account of the breaking down of rural rationing. They admit that the cause of this failure was primarily the inefficiency of these famous producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies, to do their work. Secondly, they say that as a result of their inability to cope with the work, the grains went underground and people had to go to the blackmarket to purchase the foodgrains. Well, Sir, they feel a sort of consolation that since the ryots have plenty of money earned out of the commercial crops they can afford to purchase grains in the blackmarket and they mean by implication that they need not take any steps to prevent this blackmarketing. But, I want to know, Sir, just as my hon. Friend, Mr. Narayanaswami Nayudu, how many of these ryots have this tobacco money with them. I do not know whether the majority of the ryots being poor, will be able to procure paddy in the blackmarket. I ask whether there is sufficient money with the masses to purchase paddy in the blackmarket? It is admitted there is paddy there. Then what steps did the Government take to make those foodgrains released to the people. If they found it difficult to get them released what steps have they taken to satisfy the immediate wants of the people. The statement says there is plenty of paddy in the district, and they say they did not want to bring in paddy either from Kistna or any other adjoining surplus district, because the incentive to procurement within the district would have gone. Do they want the people to suffer then?

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You have not been able to make the ryots surrender their paddy immediately and you say that paddy has gone underground. Until you are able to make the people surrender their paddy, is it not your duty to see that paddy from other districts is brought in order that people may not suffer. On the other hand, you say, there is no necessity for it and if you have done it there would be no incentive for the local ryots to surrender their paddy. Does it not amount to doing things in a bureaucratic way?"

"What is the situation now? I find from the statement that the situation in the district, however, is slowly improving and stocks are now being sent in small quantities. I ask, is it sufficient? Is the despatch of paddy in such small quantities to the rural areas sufficient to meet the needs of the people? Will the people be saved from starvation as a result of the despatch of such small quantities of paddy? We want an answer to these questions. In this connexion, I have to refer to a supplementary question I put on the 23rd April. In that question I asked the Hon. Minister for Food whether in view of the fact that these producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies have failed in their objective, the Government would think of revising their policy in regard to these societies? At once came a categorical reply that it was too early to give out the intention of the Government before they were in full possession of the facts. Therefore, I thought that the Government had not come to any conclusion in regard to that matter. I went home that evening and found from the papers that the Government had issued a Press Communique stating the intention of the Government, adopting the very words of the Minister contained in his answer. I put also a question whether the producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies in the four districts were suspended. When I put these questions on the floor of the House, could not the same answer be given to the House? Is it the way that Government want to treat this House? When I put the question in the morning, we were told that nothing was decided, but in the evening we found a Press Communique issued on the very same subject. I submit, Sir, that Government have not been fair to this House in withholding information and making us to rely on the statement issued to newspapers."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"I thought your question referred to the general policy."

K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR:—"It is not a general one, Sir. I shall leave it at that, Sir, and come to the other points."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"Oh! You have other points?"

K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Sir, when the Government wanted to give up the ordinary trade channels so far as the procurement and distribution of foodgrains were concerned, we on this side of the House cried hoarse, we

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implored the Government and even entreated them not to experiment with the lives of human beings when they were in mid-stream. They said, 'we have a very splendid plan and we are sure to succeed.' Now, they admit in three or four places of the statement that 'they have failed because the trouble was largely due to the inability of the new procurement machinery to cope with the work.' Then they say that 'the second cause was the change-over of the agency of procurement from the millers to the producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies, and again they say, 'the fact that the societies have proved inefficient as procuring agents in Guntur district could not be disputed'. It is also stated, that the result of the failure of the societies to procure sufficient paddy for the requirements of the district, much less for export, was that the ryots with paddy on their hands sold it in the blackmarket at that highest prices they could get for it. In the end what had they to do? They had again to go to the normal trade channels which they condemned at first and said that they should not be entrusted with the work. As a matter of fact, they condemned the entire trading community. Of course, they may be blackmarketing among some of them, but you should treat them in the best manner possible and not condemn the whole community. They have got very great experience and you should try to utilize their experience. Do not entrust this work to this new machinery however efficient that may be in your own opinion. Our opinion is quite the contrary and our representations in this regard to Government have proved abortive. What is the result? In the words of the Press Communique issued on 23rd April by the Government, the position in the deficit districts continues to cause anxiety and that Guntur which is a surplus district is facing a crisis. It is also stated that on account of the failure of the producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies, the situation in the Circars gives room for anxiety. If only, Sir, the Government had the sense or had given some weight to the representations made from this side of the House, this situation would not have arisen in those districts, especially in Guntur. Now, what have you done in respect of the matter? You have gone back to the very people whom you condemned as very unfit and therefore, our complaint has been entirely justified by the situation created by your conduct. (Interruption by the Hon. Sri K. Madhava Menon 'Live and learn.') Sir, this situation would not have arisen if you had listened to us and you would have eased the anxiety of these unfortunate people. Well, Sir, after all we live to learn, and since you say, we live to learn, would you allow yourself to be benefited by the experience in the four districts of the Circars? With regard to the policy in the other districts I am not aware of, but I would suggest your waiting for some time more in view of the experience of the working of the new machinery you have set up, so that people may not suffer. Therefore, I would appeal to the Government to be benefited by the experience they have gained in those four districts and try to revise their policy with regard to these societies, and restore the ordinary trade channels.

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In this connection, I would like to draw the pointed attention of the Government to one more sentence that occurs in the statement. The reason given, or one of the reasons for inadequate procurement is, that Dr. Ranga is reported to have stated that he advised the ryots if necessary to resort to Satyagraha by not yielding their stocks to the Government and letting it to be acquired by force."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" It has been referred to by two hon. Members already."

K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Here, I am asking the Government to take a different view of the matter."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" It is not an extract from the statement, but an extract from the *Indian Express*."

K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Yes, but Government have not contradicted it and so I take it that they rely on that extract."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" How can the Government contradict that statement?"

K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—" I thought Government had taken it for granted and if they think that it is not true, it is up to the Government to take a different view. But, what steps have they taken to prevent instigations of such responsible persons? Dr. Ranga has instigated the ryots, in the words of the *Indian Express*, not to surrender paddy to the Government. Does it not constitute an offence on the part of any ryot to withhold paddy and not surrender according to the orders issued by the Government. Here is a responsible person, a top-ranking Congress leader, who is instigating the people to commit an offence. What steps have Government taken against that gentleman, who is responsible for the present troubles in Guntur, according to this uncontradicted statement, which is extracted in this statement. Why is it they have not taken any action against him? Is it because he is a top-ranking leader that he should go scot-free? Is it not necessary on the part of the Government to take action against him so that such offence may not be committed not only in that district but in every other district also, especially when they have given publicity to it? I would ask Government to ponder over the matter and take necessary steps before it is too late."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I am sorry I gave you some tea."

K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—" What we want, Sir, to know is what steps have the Government taken to alleviate the sufferings of the Guntur people. Neither the statement nor the Press Communiqué makes the position clear. What is the present position, Sir? What steps have the Government taken?"

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MR. PRESIDENT :—“ You will hear it from the Hon. the Minister if you allow him to reply.”

K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ What are the steps they are taking and is there any possibility of starvation and consequent deaths? What steps are they going to take with regard to the other districts as a result of the experience that they have had in this part of the country or do they want Guntur to be repeated in other parts of the Province also in order to revise their policy? I want a reply for all these, Sir.”

K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ My hon. Friend over there and I belong to Malabar. He and I come from that place which is the first victim of these producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ I hope the Hon. Mr. Madhava Menon will be more prudent not to tickle his friends.”

* K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ The first victim is Malabar. But it is far away from Madras, from Andhra Desa and other places. It is behind the Western ghats and nobody knows what is taking place there and people who come from there like Mr. Madhava Menon make much of these producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies. It is not true that the scheme is a success because they are making huge profits. Anybody can make profits in the circumstances in which these societies are placed. I would make in one year with a few thousands lakhs of rupees if monopoly is given. You do not know, Sir, what is taking place there. In the area in which I live there is a co-operative society with Rs. 65,000 capital and they may have made a net profit of 1 lakh of rupees within a short period. It is a monopoly. The food supply has been made the monopoly of a society and there is pilfering, stealing and all sorts of things. My hon. Friend might deny but I can prove everything, Sir. The persons hit by these societies are the poor Mappillas. I may quote one instance about these societies in the area in which I live and about their employees. In this area there were 42 rationing offices before the producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies came into being. After the coming into existence of producer-cum-consumer co-operative society it reduced these ration shops to 32 out of 42. Before the producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies came on the scene 27 shops were in the hands of the Muslims. They reduced these to 8 from 27. Seventy-one Muslims were engaged in these shops and they were reduced to 11 Muslims. These unfortunate Muslims have been the sufferers because of the political split between one party and another. Mr. President, Sir, in the election of Directors in Manjeri in Moplahnad this was evidenced. I think my hon. Friend, Dr. Rajan, knows about it. Out of about 2,800 share-holders approximately, 900 are non-Muslims and 1,800 are Muslims. But the election of Directors were manipulated in such a way that no Muslims except two were elected.”

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MR. PRESIDENT :—“ My hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, will kindly allow me to make an observation. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition has spoken about producer-cum-consumer societies and given all facts when the budget was under consideration. The producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies are not as such before the House now. We are only concerned with the food position in Guntur. I want to request the hon. the Leader of the Opposition that if he has got to say anything regarding Guntur I have no objection to his going on. I only request him to stop his statement about the conditions in Malabar and confine himself to Guntur.”

K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ These co-operative societies are not ideal institutions. They must be scrapped everywhere. The Hon. Dr. Rajan who is now having the portfolio of Food has himself given an indirect warning to the ex-Prime Minister at its very inception and the only hope now is that himself and the Hon. the Prime Minister have given a warning in an indirect way in those days. Now it is left to the new Ministry to remedy the situation by going into the whole matter. Not only myself but everybody wants the Government not to launch on this scheme and now that it has almost been scrapped in Andhra Desa, we hope that it will also take place in Malabar.”

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ Sir, I do not want to keep the House longer than it is absolutely necessary. When the need for this adjournment motion was brought to my notice, I did not feel it so very urgent as it was urged to be. I did make a statement on the Guntur situation at the latest I could get it. I tried to avoid an adjournment motion if it were meant to elicit the facts of the case as it prevails to-day by making such a statement but I did not succeed. If the hon. Gentleman would have gone through the statement not as a critic but as one who wanted to understand the efforts of the Government to tackle the situation that has come up before them so suddenly he would have realized that we did put into it all the efforts that were necessary to tide over the difficulty. This afternoon Mr. Narayanaswami Nayudu wanted some information but I could not give the information at once. He did suggest that I could get it from the Secretariat even at that late stage but since I could not quite grasp the details of what he said, of course I did not take that advice. Even now if that piece of information which he wanted would help me to clarify the situation I shall certainly do so. The statement made by the Government was an honest and downright statement for which they should have credit. By various stages we told clearly the steps we have taken to deal with the breakdown and we have also not hesitated to say how it broke down and have laid the blame on the doors responsible. Therefore, there is nothing to worry about. Surely the present situation as it is to-day is changed, Sir. The report deals with the position five days ago. Since then the anxiety which the Government had is now completely more or less gone. Procurement has increased, ration

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depots have been provided with paddy and storage is getting accumulated gradually.

“ No doubt the difficulty in procurement is still there but one factor which I would like to place before the House is there is complete failure of millet crops. Guntur is divided into two areas, one is upland dry area where commercial crops like tobacco and other things are grown. The other is delta area where paddy alone is grown. Generally in normal years what happens is the upland lands grow their own millets which is the staple food of the people and whether they produced tobacco or millets, the Government did not envy them and had no intention of asking them to do this and that. Now when even millets have failed and these people in the uplands who used to grow and eat millets did not get their food and finding sufficient money in their hands to pay enhanced price for paddy, there was nothing wrong in their coming and taking over the available paddy in the low lands. There is nothing to be envied here. The Government were giving only a statement of bare facts as it existed. They were describing the position step by step to lay the blame at their proper source. When they were mentioning these they had naturally to mention about the difficulty in procurement and about people who hindered the same. A few important Congressmen did as a matter of fact hinder such work. There is nothing to defend for their actions and the mere fact that I have failed to make mention of such a fact is proof positive that we recognized the fact and if things would become necessary of course whatever action should be taken shall be taken. There is no use of my thundering here or on the platform ‘I shall do this and that.’ The other day it is to my great regret the ex-Premier in the Assembly made a statement. He says that if Dr. Rajan touches Ranga, a series of Rangas will come. There is no use of talking like that. There is no need for that. I even asked Dr. Ranga to help me with his propositions. It is not as if we are trying to quarrel with everybody. The ex-Prime Minister said that we must give Rs. 5 more for each bag of paddy. There were also many other suggestions made.

8 p.m. “ But the Government of India have instructed the Madras Government on the price of paddy. I had been to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Food Member of the Government of India, to discuss with him and in fact Dr. Ranga was a little prophetic in saying that Dr. Rajan would fly to Rajendra Prasad. I did go and apprise him of the situation and asked him whether he could not enhance it in any way. But he said he could not find his way to do it both for reasons, national and international. But he did not stop there and we set to work to find out some way of raising the price of paddy for the producer. The Press Communiqué that was issued would have convinced anybody as to the efforts made in devising methods by which we could put another eight annas into the pockets of the producers. We worked up at the rate of a half and quarter anna for the various transactions in the process wherein the paddy passed from the producer to the consumer and by a

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series of stemming up, we were able to scrap up about half a rupee in the whole transaction. But this means that we have cut down the middlemen's profit terribly and it would not be worthwhile of any man to enter into the transaction. We have fixed the prices in such a way that the middlemen's profit would but cut, though they had come to our rescue and at last half a rupee was procured to the producer. Also we have asked the producers not to give paddy but to give it in the shape of rice so that they might have the bran and other minor items and in that way he stands to gain. We have done our best under the existing circumstances to put as much as possible into the pocket of the producer. Nobody seems to have recognized the efforts we have made nor at least appreciated what we have done and it is a misfortune that the public at large could not actually understand the way in which this eight annas per maund has been arrived at. They imagine that the price of paddy has been raised and it is all wrong. The price remains the same but by some adjustments which neither enhances the price of paddy nor materially reduces the margin of profits, we have given annas eight to the producer. That is really the position that we have endeavoured to do. We have not hesitated at the voices of objection which will be raised against us, when we touch the producer-cum-consumer societies; we did not flinch. We openly said that these societies have failed. Not only did we say so but we stopped the activities of the societies and on the day before the issue of the press communiqué, the procurement work by the co-operative societies had come to a standstill. More than that, a Government of any guts cannot do. If our actions are the subject-matter of criticisms, I regret to say that what all we had done had not been appreciated. While you are entitled to criticise, I at least expected, from the knowledge of the fact that we have stood up to our conviction, appreciation that the way in which we had proceeded is a right one and that is the best that could be done in the circumstances. The question was asked whether we are going to give a bonus as was given last year. I may say that the Government of India took the Madras Government to task for it. The Assam Government said that they must provide for a bounty and they started an agitation and the Central Government had to pull up the Madras Government. Therefore, it is not possible. Even if it were possible, supposing it were possible, what would be the cost involved; it would amount to nearly 10 crores of rupees, if we were to give two or three rupees for each bag. Food, I agree, is worth any thing but the situation has not become so critical as to drain the coffers of the Government to the last pie. The fact is that we have fided over the situation and I say that there is nothing in Guntur that we need worry about. This fact is proof positive of the fact that our steps are correct and the indignant that we displayed in this matter is entitled to the consideration of the public at large.

“Reference has been made to the differences in the Congress camp. In any party, there are differences of opinion, but that does

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not necessarily mean that as a consequence of it, we must have only famine. Feeling ran high on certain questions and opinions also were expressed strongly but on that account, have we flinched from doing the right thing? We have stopped the activities of the societies in that district because we felt that that was the only solution. We have stopped that in the ceded districts because we felt that that was the only solution. We had information from the Collector of East Godavari with whom I had a conversation at four o'clock while the House was sitting and he expressed to me how they were able to get along and how the situation has come back to normalcy. It was a good assurance to hear from him and I can give that information to hon. Members of this House. I assure them let them not be frightened that something very serious has happened and that the Ministry has not done the right thing in dealing with the situation. We have done everything possible though it meant causing unpleasantness in four or five districts in which this scheme has been put forward and worked for the last two or three months. Large amounts of money have been involved in those societies. We also know how these societies failed. We cannot allow that money, the people's money, to go like that. The fact of the matter is that the scheme was put into operations at a most awkward time and that is really the cause. The harvest is yet incomplete; paddy is coming and the societies were asked to start their operations. The result was that while they wanted to buy, they had to buy large quantities, they had only a few lakhs where crores were wanted. The result was that they told the agriculturists to keep on paddy while they would arrange for money with which to buy the stock. The producer kept it with him but only for a time. He had calls on his money for payment of taxes and for other things. He was pressed into a situation wherein he was forced to part with his paddy as quickly as possible so that he might realize the amount as he could not hold over his stocks till the societies came to him. That is reason No. 1. Reason No. 2 is they had not enough godowns where they could keep their paddy in and they had not the mills necessary for the purpose and they had to go to the millers to get the paddy husked. There were so many obstacles inherent in suddenly starting on a new venture and things would have been difficult even with the best of staff. But here the staff were quite inexperienced in buying and milling. They were graduates and literature M.As. but they were not the best men suitable. Inexperience of these people added to the difficulty and especially at the infant stages of the operations, all these things accounted for the failure of the scheme. There is nothing very wonderful or defeatist about the failure. It was a venture which was started without proper precautions and without being assured of sufficient capital and experience and the result was they were unequal to the task. We had therefore to revert to the old machinery as quickly as possible to retrieve the situation. We have saved the situation. On behalf of the Government, I have placed my cards on the table and I am glad

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the motion has provided me with an opportunity of explaining the position in a clear manner. I want people to understand the attitude of Government and I want hon. Members opposite to appreciate our difficulties and to help us in our attempts to tide over the unfortunate situation which will affect you and everybody in the country. We are glad that the grave situation has been tided over and the hon. Members may rest assured and leave the situation to us to solve."

SRI M. D. T. KUMARASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Who does the Hon. Minister mean by producer, is it the person to whom eight annas is given?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" It is the person who produces the grain."

SRI M. D. T. KUMARASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" In that case the actual cultivator will not be able to have any for his own purpose."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The hon. Member does not understand what I have said. The producer is whoever gives paddy for procurement."

SRI M. D. T. KUMARASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" The tahsildars and the deputy tahsildars do it differently."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I am afraid I cannot go into a review or an explanation of the definition of who is the producer and how the matter could be dealt with."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" This is a matter which can be decided by Government by executive action and ensure that proper steps are taken to see that money reaches the proper person."

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—" The real crux of the position is the price the societies were paying. While the millers were paying, say Rs. 10, the societies were prepared to give only Rs. 9, the balance of Re. 1 constituting their profits. In other words for every bag of paddy they sold to the society they were asked to lose Re. 1 but they were getting it in full in days when the miller was the procurer. The real question is what the ryot gets for the rice, I do hope that this Government will not stand on prestige and will come to a quick decision regarding the question of the subsidy to be given."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I declare the motion talked out."

V.—HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I have to announce to the House, that the following message has been received by me from His Excellency the Governor :—

"In pursuance of clause (b) of sub-section (2) of section 62 of the Government of India Act, 1935, I, Archibald Edward Nye, Governor of Madras, hereby prorogue this session of the Madras Legislative Council with effect from the conclusion of business on 25th April 1947."

The House stands prorogued."